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FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4641
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 1208
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0591
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1297
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 0301
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2160
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2488
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 0770
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 0686
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STATE FOR ECA/A/L AND SCA/PPD

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SUBJECT: ENGLISH LANGUAGE FELLOWS IN CENTRAL ASIA: SURVIVING AND THRIVING

¶1. (U) English Language Fellows across Central Asia are making solid contributions to English departments and communities despite the multiple challenges of living and working in Central Asia. Having visited all the Fellows at their sites during the past 18 months, the Regional English Language Officer (RELO) recently met with all six of the Fellows in Central Asia at the American University of Cairo's 14th Annual TEFL Skills Conference and learned more about the Fellows' personal and professional experiences, including the successes and the challenges. In often difficult circumstances, the Fellows are making a positive difference to thousands of young Central Asian lives.

¶2. (U) Khujand, Tajikistan, Success: The Fellow in Khojand, Tajikistan, had over 50 cell phone numbers of new friends in his phone within a few weeks of his arrival. His willingness to talk to anybody anytime anywhere has made him extremely popular. His cheerful demeanor and desire to work with English teachers from all institutions has fired up the small but enthusiastic community of English-speakers in this important but isolated city in northern Tajikistan.

¶3. (U) Khujand, Tajikistan, Challenge: Unfortunately, all of his original students were forced to pick cotton for the first six weeks of the academic year. His classrooms were empty. He managed to find other students and has become a fixture around town, drinking tea and chatting with eager Tajiks when not in class.

¶4. (U) Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Success: The Fellow in Dushanbe has been a steady, calm, teacher-trainer and mentor to hundreds of young Tajik English teachers. His wisdom and depth of experience have added much value to their pedagogical instruction and he is much sought after as a speaker and advisor.

¶5. (U) Dushanbe, Tajikistan, Challenge: The Dushanbe Fellow was able to continue his work despite more than a month of no heat, electricity, or running water throughout the country during the worst cold spell in 40 years at the beginning of 2008. The RELO watched him interact with pale, sick, and numb students who were all wearing their outdoor clothing in class because the indoor temperature was barely above freezing.

¶6. (U) Taraz, Kazakhstan, Success: The Fellow in Taraz, a small southern town near the Kyrgyz border, has created a much-loved teachers' resource center full of previously unavailable

English-language teaching materials. In addition, she has revamped outdated curriculum and added spark and energy to the English department. She has also teamed up with a local NGO for a village teacher-training project, bringing educational guidance and expertise to often-neglected rural communities.

¶7. (U) Taraz, Kazakhstan, Challenge: One cold, rainy evening, the Fellow spent five hours crisscrossing town on a local bus, not knowing where she was, where the bus was going, or how to ask for help in the local language. Fortunately, she eventually got off and found her way home. She has since then managed to organize private, reliable transport for herself.

¶8. (U) COMMENT: The Fellows across Central Asia are making a significant impact in the lives of young people and others. English is widely considered the key to the future, and the Fellows, despite the many hurdles and logistical tangos of living in Central Asia, are bringing English and the best of American culture to thousands of people across the region. This is an efficient and effective program that should be allowed to grow and thrive, just like the hardy English Language Fellows in Central Asia. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND